

Paris 4 July 1883

that he had nothing left for him to do & his spirits & with them his strength have been continually declining - He always seemed glad when I or any other friend went to see him until the last week when he has become much weaker & refuses to see any one. Hooker is I believe the only person he consents to see & even with him he declines conversation - The camp is going out for want of fuel. Pray give the very kind regards of my wife as well as myself to Mrs Gray - My wife admires & somewhat envies her spirit & her strength which I trust among other journeys will some day carry her back to England

With our united best wishes believe me -
Most sincerely yours

John Ball
Unfortunately your last note
indicating Mrs & Mr Burgess came
while I was packing up & I had barely time
to send a note & the hope of seeing them in the autumn.

Mr Burgess was kind enough to leave the parcel of plants along with your note at my house but I had no time to open it - Of course it is from Mr Burgess

My dear Dr Gray - You have heaped coals of fire on my head by your kind letters to say nothing of a very hot one in the shape of a kind note from Mrs Gray - It has not been indolence or forgetfulness but the difficulty of knowing what to say that has kept me from writing - You have tempted me by the most attractive propositions that I can imagine to myself especially in your second letter received about three weeks ago - The notion of visiting in your company Mexico & then travelling in the Spring to California, with ulterior plans for the summer is so delightful that it is enough to make a man break through all ties & neglect all duties - My virtue however still resists however

feebly but I cannot make up
my mind to renounce altogether
the hope of seeing something of the
far west in your company.

The fact is that my health has
not been flourishing through the
last spring - I was twice laid up
with bronchial attacks which
were very tedious and I am scarcely
yet rid of cough - We are now
on our way to the Alps, starting
this evening & from past experience
I expect to be thoroughly set up
by the air of the higher region
but my wife has been troubling
herself about my health & I
shall find it more difficult than
it was last year to get her to agree
to my remaining long at a distance

On the other hand I am clear that
she is not strong enough to undertake
the journey across your big continent
& I don't yet see how to arrange
for her to remain in the Eastern
States or Canada during my absence.

Of one thing you may be sure &
that is that if at all possible I shall
try to arrange so as to meet you
next spring in California or elsewhere
in the Far West; & you will probably
have a letter from me asking you
to give me a rendezvous somewhere.
I grieve to say that Bentham has
reached the close of his noble life
for unless he should recover strength
to a degree scarcely to be expected -
I cannot wish mere existence
to be prolonged - Since the appearance
of the last part of the General he has
felt & sometimes expressed the feeling